LE·HI·HO News

the Lehigh Valley Homophile Organization
Box 1003, Moravian Station, Bethlehem, Pa. 18018

February 1977

BARRY KOHN APOLOGIZES!

Barry Kohn, Pennsylvania Deputy Attorney General, who was due to speak at our January 23rd General Meeting, publicly extends his apologies to the membership of LE-HI-HO for not being able to attend. Unfortunately his car succumbed to the weather leaving him without transportation to the meeting. But, Barry has promised "come hell or high water" to be the guest speaker (about anti-sodomy repeal and Senate Bill 83) at this February's General Meeting (the 27th), and we are confident that nothing can deter him. Do not miss him!●

DANCE AWAY ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

Our most successful dance of last year will be repeated on Saturday, February 12 from 8:00 p.m. to Midnight at the Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley. Tickets at door, $1.00. B.Y.O.B. (mixers and snacks available). Even those who don't dance have a good time at our dances, so come and bring friends. Anyone willing to help with decorations or refreshments should please show up at the church at 2:00 p.m., or call Joe/Rick (215-437-2642).●

NEW YEAR/NEW BOARD

The new Board of Directors met in January to elect new officers and assign duties. Ken Burke will continue as Chairperson and Program Director, Bob Steelman will function as Secretary and Ron Seeds as treasurer. Roger Edelman is Librarian/Archivist and Rick Balmer will remain in charge of Speaking Engagements. If you would like to get involved in anything, including social activities, refreshments, the Welcoming Committee, etc., please let us know.●

BACK IN THE "CAUCUS" AGAIN

At last January 18th's meeting of the Board of Directors Chairperson Ken Burke proposed, and obtain unanimous approval for, reassociation with the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus. In his letter to the Co-chairpersons of the "Caucus" Joe Burns and Mary Nancarrow, Ken said "It has become evident to us.....the (P.R.G.C.) has rededicated itself to the principles and the spirit upon which it was founded. And, therefore, in the interests of gay solidarity, we pledge our support..."For those of you unfamiliar with the "Caucus" situation: Last fall the "Caucus"was ripped by personality conflicts and appeared to be going nowhere, this prompted LE-HI-HO to suspend it's support.●

General Editor: Rick Balmer Ass. Ed.: Robert Steelman, Roger Edelman
Graphics and Layout: Ken Burke

GAY CELEBRITIES: BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913-1976)

Benjamin Britten, one of Great Britain and the world's most eminent and successful composers, died on December 4 from a chronic heart condition. At his bedside was the celebrated tenor Peter Pears. It was always widely known that the two men were lovers of 40-plus years, and the media, at least in recent years, did not ignore the fact, although euphemistically referring to them as "life-long companions", among other polite phrases. Best known for his operas, which included Peter Grimes, Albert Herring, Billy Budd and The Turn of the Screw, Britten laced some of them with homoerotic themes, and most explicitly in his last opera, Death in Venice (1973), based on the Thomas Mann novella. Many of the roles in these works were tailored specifically for Pears, including in this last opera that of Aschenbach, the aging writer who comes to Venice and falls in love with a beautiful Polish boy. Past 60 himself, Pears made his Met debut with the role, although Britten was too ill to conduct the production himself. While neither man probably regarded himself as a spokesperson for Gay Liberation, one can certainly see the two as contributors to the Gay Liberation Process, and thus mourn Britten and feel for Pears.●

OF WIDOWS AND KINGS: GAY TELEVISION RETURNS

The seeming flood of gay themes and characters on TV last fall only abated temporarily, for the coming month sees new installments. On February 10 (Thursday, Ch. 39, 9-10:00 p.m.) an episode of the highly acclaimed drama series VISIONS entitled "The War Widow" treats a reportedly sympathetically handled lesbian relationship, using human beings instead of stereotypes. And on February 24 (Thursday, Ch. 39, 9-11:00 p.m.) one of Britain's finest actors , Ian McKellan, will star in the title role of Christopher Marlowe's Edward II , "a gripping drama of violence and homosexual passion". In addition, NBC has scheduled for mid-February the made-for-TV film "In the Glitter Palace", starring Barbara Hershey, Chad Everett and Diana Scarwid. Described in the Advocate as a story about star-crossed lesbian lovers "thrust into a world of blackmail, murder, deceit and fraud", it sounds ominously awful. However, the attitudes of all those involved plus the presence of gay advisers working with the film from the first idea all the way through the actual production may just rescue the film from the depths TV usually assigns to gay people.●

DATES TO NOTE....DATES TO NOTE....DATES TO NOTE....DATES TO NOTE....DATES TO.

FEB. 12 Sat., Valentine's Day Dance (see front page)
20 Sun., G.C.S. of Berks County Meeting, 147 N. 10th St. (3rd floor), Reading, Pa. Info: call Joe/Rick (215-437-2642)
23 Wed., LE-HI-HO Board of Directors meets. Info: call Ken (264-7770)
27 Sun., LE-HI-HO General Meeting, Barry Kohn, guest speaker (see front page). Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley, 701 Lechauweki Ave., Fountain Hill (Bethlehem), Pa. Info: call Ken/Lou (264-7770)

MARCH 5 Sat., Pa. Rural Gay Caucus Meeting. Info: call Joe/Rick (437-2642)
12 Sat., Deadline for LE-HI-HO Newsletter. Info: call Rick (866-6320)
16 Wed., Governor's Council Meeting, Harrisburg. Info: call Ken
23 Wed., LE-HI-HO Board of Directors meets (Tentative).
27 Sun., LE-HI-HO General Meeting. Tentative program on Transvestism and Transexualism. Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley.

Also: SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT Friday, March 25, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Human Sexuality Course, Lehigh University
Info: call Rick (866-6320)

Our Byzantine Senate

The co-chairpersons of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus, Mary Nancarrow and Joe Burns, urge each of us to read Senate Bill No. 83, reprinted below, and to take certain steps to make known our opposition to the passage of this legislation. The Board Of Directors of LE-HI-HO joins in their appeal for your help.

SENATE BILL NO. 83 SESSION OF 1977

Introduced By Nolan, Murray, Ross, Smith And Stapleton, January 4, 1977
Referred To State Government, January 4, 1977

AN ACT

Prohibiting the employment of certain individuals in positions designated by the General Assembly and providing a penalty. The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the meanings given to them in this section:

"Homosexual." One who is inclined to or who practices or engages in sexual or erotic activity with a member of one's own sex.

"Individuals convicted of sex crimes." Any individual convicted of violations of Chapter 31 of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes (relating to sexual offenses) or violations of the prior act of June 24, 1939 (P.L.872,No.375), known as "The Penal Code" insofar as they related to sex connected offenses.

Section 2. Certain hiring prohibited.

(a) Notwithstanding any law or executive order or directive to the contrary, no individual or governmental agency having the power to hire individuals to fill vacant positions shall hire any homosexual or individual convicted of a sex crime to fill any of the following positions:

(1) State policeman.
(2) State correctional guards or staff.
(3) Correction counselors.
(4) State probation officers.
(5) Officers, nurses and staff for any State institution dealing with mental illness and mental retardation.
(6) Officers and staff for any State institution which treats or rehabilitates individuals suffering from physical handicaps.

(b) Any individual who violates the provisions of subsection (a) shall be dismissed from their position and be guilty of a summary offense and be subject to a fine of $300 and imprisonment of 90 days.

Section 3. Construction.

This act is deemed to be and shall be construed to be a sound exercise of those residual police powers inherent within this Commonwealth and necessary for the public health, welfare and safety of the citizens of this Commonwealth.

Section 4. Effective date.

This act shall take effect immediately.

If the bill reaches the floor of the Legislature for a vote, very few legislators will have the courage to oppose it, for fear of adverse reaction among their constituents. Our job is to let our legislators know they do have many constituents who object to this bill -- legislators do pay attention to mail from their home districts. If this bill becomes law, it almost certainly will not be the last of its type -- each of us is a potential victim. To make your opposition known, the Rural Caucus suggests the following steps:

1. Write to the Senators who sponsored the bill voicing your opposition: Senator Joseph Smith, Chairperson, State Government Committee; Senator Thomas Nolan; Senator Martin Murray; Senator James Ross; Senator Patrick Stapleton. Main Capitol Bldg., Harrisburg, Pa. 17120.

2. Call the Governor's Hot Line -- toll free number 800-932-0784 -- and tell them you want these five Senators to be told of your opposition to the bill.

3. Call ten friends and ask them to do the same.

4. Write to your own Senator and representative telling them to vote against the bill.

5. For more information about this legislation call Barry Kohn, 215-238-7351.

6. Please make your opposition known today since we understand that some legislators want to move this bill through the legislature quickly.

7. If you have an extra stamp we would appreciate receiving copies of your letters for future use. Send them to Joe Burns, 1136 Walnut Street, Allentown, Pa. 18102.●

INTROBOOK COUPONS....

LE-HI-HO has for the use of its members a WLVT-TV Introbook containing discount coupons for a number of area restaurants, theatres, recreational facilities, college sports events, concerts and other attractions. For example: $3 off on dinner for two at The Inn of the Unicorn, two-for-the-price-of-one admission to Guthsville Playhouse, free admission to a Lehigh basketball game. A number of the coupons are for the Reading and Stroudsburg regions. If you would like to use the Introbook, call Bob at 866-6390 or see him at one of the regular monthly meetings.●

QUEENLY HONORS....

In the Dec. 19, 76 issue of PARADE magazine the following item appeared in their weekly gossip column:

Q. It was well known in theatrical circles for years and years that the late British playwright Noel Coward was gay, gay, gay. Why, then, did Queen Elizabeth II knight him?--F.T.,College Park, Md.

A. Homosexuality does not exclude a talented person in Great Britain from receiving royal honors. Homosexuals have made outstanding contributions to British culture.●

EPISCOPALIANS, YES....

On January 10 Ellen Marie Barrett, who is openly gay, was ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church, overcoming opposition to her ordination because she is both a woman and a lesbian. Bishop Paul Moore, who performed the rite, stated, "Many persons with homosexual tendencies are presently in the ordained ministry. Ellen Barrett's candor in this regard is not considered a barrier. . . . she is highly qualified intellectually, morally and spiritually to be a priest."●

CATHOLICS, NO....

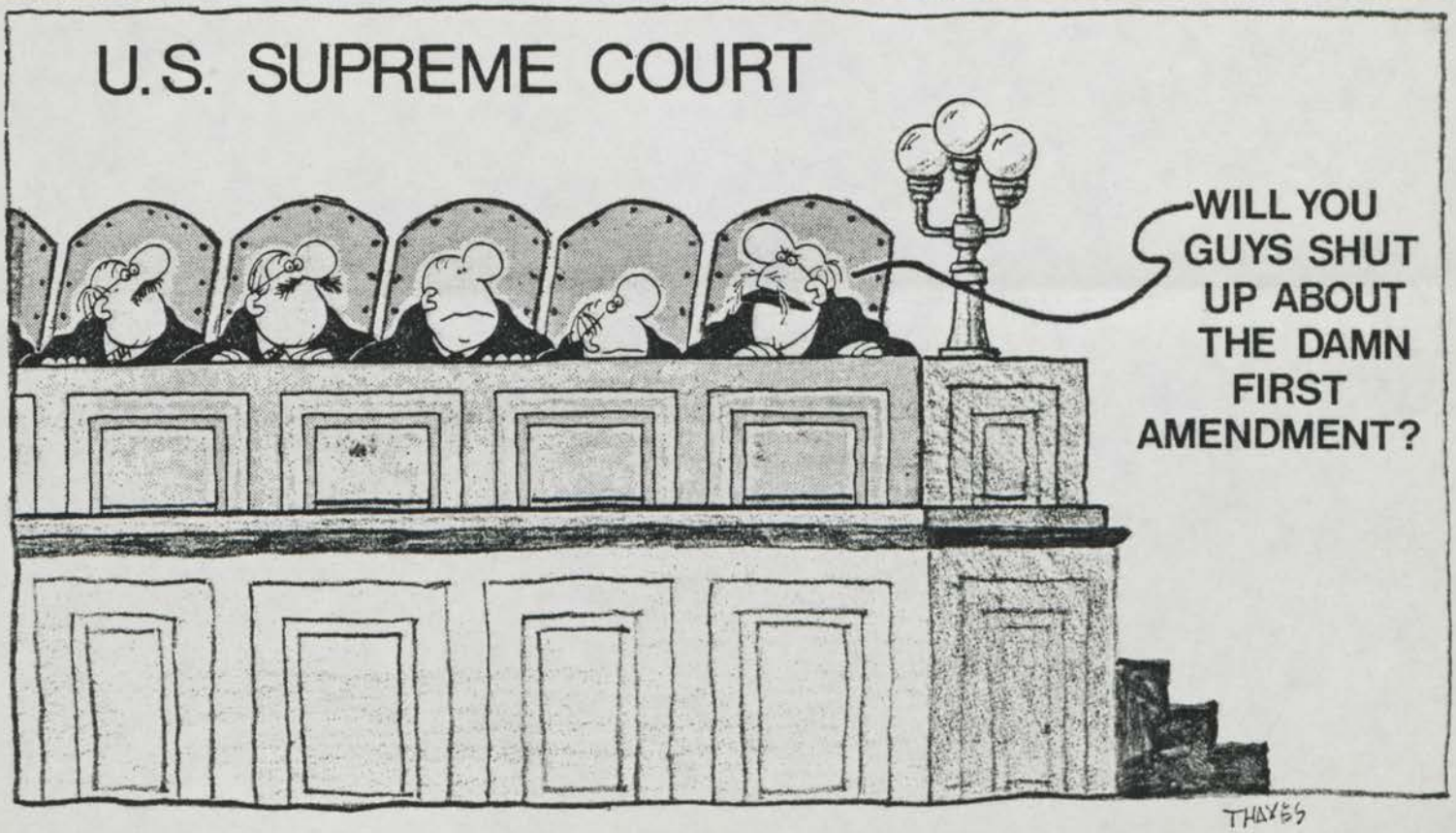
On January 9 the New York Times reported that a 36 year old candidate for the Jesuit priesthood, who otherwise completed the order's arduous requirements over a 13 year period, had been told by his superiors that he would not be ordained because he is a homosexual! The person who is the subject of this harassment is Thomas Sweetin. His superior, the Rev. Albert Bartlett, vice provincial for priestly preparation for the New York Jesuit province, said that there was "no way" to ordain Mr. Sweetin as the average Catholic layperson simply is not ready for this. Mr. Sweetin has received at least a dozen recommendations required for his ordination. He has been denied ordination for 24 months because of his gayness, even though he states that he is not sexually active. Church authorities have refused comment on the matter other than to comment on the theological "difficulties" of ordaining a gay person.●

YOUR LIBRARY
AND WHAT IT NEEDS FROM YOU

In accepting the position of librarian/archivist for Le-Hi-Ho, I look forward to a productive future for our library. I am in the process of classifying and cataloging the material we have already to facilitate its use by members of the group.

Our library now consists of approximately 250 books; newsletters, newspapers, and magazines from 75 different gay organizations across the country; numerous pamphlets and periodical articles; and the Le-Hi-Ho archives. Although we have the largest collection of homosexual-related literature in the area, our library must continue to grow with the ever-increasing amount of literature that is written about the gay movement and homosexuality.

That is where everyone can help to develop the library. Although I can organize the library myself, it is impossible for me as one individual to scour the many daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals for current information. Therefore I welcome any assistance in collecting old and new homosexual literature for the library. Items I am looking for are newspaper and magazine articles (please jot down the name and date of the periodical from which the article came); books; pamphlets; old and current newsletters, newspapers, and magazines published by gay groups (such as The Advocate, Christopher St., Drummer, Gay, Gay Era, Gay News, etc.); and memorabilia such as match packs, napkins, advertising cards from gay bars, baths, and clubs. If you have any old or new literature dealing with homosexuality, remember our library and consider donating this material to a worthwhile cause, rather than letting it collect dust or discarding it.

My phone number is (215) 433-2043, in case anyone has any reference questions dealing with homosexuality and the gay movement. I don't profess to be an authority on the topic, but I am housing the library and hopefully I can answer any questions by referring to the material in the library. It is for this reason I am classifying all the information we have and asking for assistance to further expand our library.●

Roger Edelman